



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
DISABILITIES SERVICES DIVISION

Milwaukee County

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Geri L. Lyday • DSD Administrator

Combined Community Services Board

Patrick Linnane – Chair

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Cathy Simpson
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October 25, 2016

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
901 N. 9th Street, Room 306
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Supervisors,

On behalf of the Combined Community Services Board (CCSB), I am writing in support of the transportation and transit initiatives in the County Executive's proposed 2017 budget. The CCSB is a citizen advisory board that provides policy guidance to the County on matters related to individuals with disabilities, mental illness or substance abuse issues. The Board is composed of community members and consumers of services.

A robust and sustainable transportation system is vital to the health of our community. As advocates for individuals with disabilities, mental health and substance abuse issues, we know that increased investment in transit is increased investment in the quality of life of the people we serve.

A robust transportation system that includes high-quality transit service and well-maintained roads and parkways is a major driver of economic development, connecting people with jobs and opportunities all over the County. For many people in our community, transit is a lifeline to maintaining independence, getting to work, school, medical appointments and recreation. Protecting this critical system from deterioration is of utmost importance.

Now is the time to come together to build a stronger transportation system by a) modernizing our transit service with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); b) stabilizing the operations of the transit system while protecting the most vulnerable members of our community by reshaping the GO Pass; and c) creating dedicated funding for transit and infrastructure maintenance with a vehicle registration fee.

Bus Rapid Transit will provide an improved transit connection to major employment and activity centers and has the potential to remarkably improve people's lives and spur economic development.

A robust network of BRT lines that build upon our local service is only possible if funding and revenues of the current transit system are stabilized. The proposed changes to the GO Pass maintain the integrity of the Pass' intent to support the members of our community who need it the most while ensuring the system that riders depend upon does not crumble from lost revenue.

For years, our community has acknowledged and discussed the need for dedicated funding to support transit and transportation. A vehicle registration fee is the only option the County can implement on its own that will meet the growing needs our transportation system. Dedicated funding for transportation is needed to ensure

our transit lines don't have to be reduced, but can instead be built upon; will allow the County to buy new buses to replace the large number of old ones at the end of their useful lives; and will allow the County to catch up on deferred maintenance in the County's infrastructure.

We urge the County to pursue changes to State law that would allow the County to craft a more flexible and equitable vehicle registration fee. We also urge that if the County Board were to reduce the level of the vehicle registration fee, that the revenue gap not be filled by cutting services used by people with disabilities and seniors or by eliminating the BRT project.

Milwaukee's community can't rely on, nor has time to wait for, the state or federal government to fully fund transit. The County needs real local leadership to ensure the sustainability of our system for the future. Please support the proposed SAVE Transit plan and help keep Milwaukee County traveling forward.

Thank you for your service to our community and your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Patrick Linnane, Chairman
Milwaukee County Combined Community Services Board